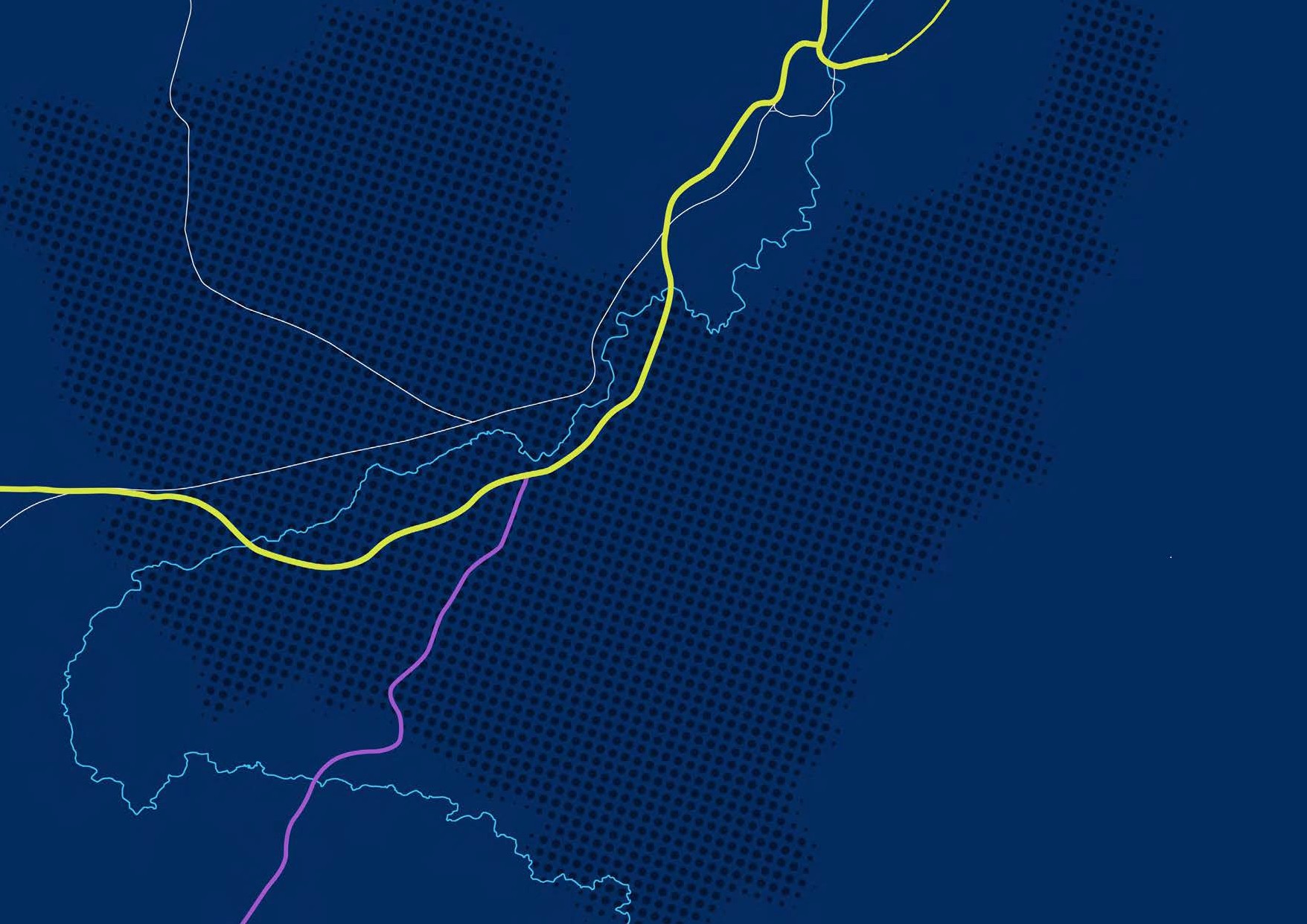
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Housing Land Availability Monitor Report

**2023-2024**

[www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/)

# 1.0 Introduction

The Housing Land Availability Monitor Report [the HL Monitor] has been prepared in support of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan (LDP) 2032. The first stage of the LDP is the Plan Strategy (PS) which was, following independent examination by the Planning Appeals Commission adopted by the Council in September 2023. The PS contains strategic and operational planning policies which primarily direct sustainable housing development to be located within the settlement hierarchy designated across the Council area[[1]](#footnote-1).

The sources of information used in the HL Monitor are considered to be the most up to date at the time of publication to inform its conclusions.

**1.1 Background**

Formulation of the PS strategic policies evolved from regional strategic policy, Department development plans, the Council’s Community Plan and non-statutory frameworks or strategies. Further, and in specific relation to housing land provision, a series of evidence gathering papers were published that took stock of existing and projected housing growth transposed from Department development plans, including remaining land availability in the Council area. All of this gathered evidence was the basis for future housing forecasts over the lifetime of the LDP to 2032.

The following strategic policies of the PS are relevant to the provision of housing land across the Council;

* Strategic Policy 01: Sustainable Development (page 36);
* Strategic Policy 08: Housing in Settlements (page 52);
* Strategic Policy 09: Housing in the Countryside (page 60);
* Strategic Mixed Use Site 01 West Lisburn/Blaris (page 72).

**1.2 Legislative Context**

In accordance with the **Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** (Section 21), the **Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015** (Regulation 25) and, following adoption of the Council’s Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, the Council is required to publish an annual monitoring report[[2]](#footnote-2) and keep under review its LDP which, for the purposes of this HL Monitor is by the following prescribed actions of the Regulations;

* The annual monitoring report must cover the twelve-month period commencing on 1st April in each year and ending on 31st March in the following year (Reg 25(1)(a));
* the report must be published within 6 months following the end of the monitoring period (Reg 25(1)(b)); and,
* the report must specify the housing land supply at the beginning and end of the reporting period (Reg 25(2)(a)).
* the number of net additional housing units built in the council’s district for (i) the reporting period, and (ii) the period since the local policies plan was first adopted or approved (Reg 25(2)(b)).

An important element of the annual monitoring report is to provide such information as necessary for the Council to;

* carry out a review of its local development plan every five years and no later than five years from the date that the local policies plan was first adopted or approved (Reg 26(1)(a)).

**1.3 Policy Context**

**The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035**

The RDS provides the overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. It is a legislative requirement that the Council must ‘take account’ of the RDS in the preparation of its LDP[[3]](#footnote-3).

The RDS highlights key driving forces for the economy such as population growth and movement, demographic change, an increasing number of households, transportation needs, economic changes, climate change and the spatial implications of divisions that still exist in our society. It seeks to inform and guide the whole community in the drive to create a dynamic, prosperous and progressive Northern Ireland in the third millennium.

The RDS influences the future distribution of development with Regional Guidance (RG) to be applied to all of Northern Ireland.

**RG6: Strengthen community cohesion**; aims to strengthen community cohesion, foster a stronger community spirit and increase our sense of place.

**RG7: Support urban and rural renaissance**; aims to develop innovative ways to bring forward under-utilised land and buildings particularly for mixed use development; promote regeneration in areas of social need; ensure that environmental quality in urban areas is improved and maintained, particularly with adequate provision of green infrastructure

**Regional Guidance (RG) 8:** **Manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development**; The varied housing needs of the whole community need to be met. This includes the availability of affordable and special needs housing. Housing is a key driver of physical, economic and social change in both urban and rural areas. Strategic planning places emphasis on the relationship between the location of housing, jobs, facilities, services and infrastructure.

The emphasis is on managing housing growth to ensure that there continues to be a focus on developing more high-quality accessible housing within existing urban areas without causing unacceptable damage to the local character and environmental quality or residential amenity of these areas.

**The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)**

Paragraph 6.135 of the SPPS sets out the regional strategic objectives for housing in settlements, as follows:

* Manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development;
* Support urban and rural renaissance; and
* Strengthen community cohesion.

Paragraph 6.139 of the SPPS states that housing allocations in the LDP should be informed by:

* RDS Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs);
* Use of the RDS housing evaluation framework;
* Allowance for existing housing commitments;
* Urban capacity studies;
* Allowance for windfall housing;
* Application of a sequential approach and identification of suitable sites for settlements of over 5,000 population;
* Housing Needs Assessment/Housing Market Analysis (HNA/HMA); and
* Transport Assessments.

Paragraph 6.140 requires a ‘plan, monitor and manage’ approach to ensure that, as a minimum, a 5-year supply of land for housing is maintained. This HL Monitor is the mechanism to do so, in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

**1.4 Department Development Plans**

The Department for Infrastructure’s Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 was, when planning powers passed to Council in April 2015, an emerging Development Plan and was considered to have been the most up-to-date evidential baseline. Housing figures and the identified housing zonings within BMAP along with committed sites (those with planning permission) and updated Housing Growth Indicator (HGI) figures were the basis upon which the number of potential units remaining over the period of the LDP were established. In addition, the potential on Urban Capacity and Windfall sites were calculated.

Detail on the calculation of the strategic housing figures are provided in Part 1 of the PS, Pages 53 to 59 and Table 3.

**1.5 Council’s Corporate Plan, Community Plan and other Frameworks/Strategies**

The HL Monitor also acts as an aid to measure the effectiveness of the Council’s Corporate Plan 2024/2028, the vision of which is ‘**To achieve** **better lives for the people who work, live in or visit the LCCC area**’. A key outcome of the Corporate Plan is housing provision where ‘**We live in resilient and environmentally - friendly places**’ (Strategic Theme 3). This can be aided by implementation of the LDP and its targeted housing provision.

The HL Monitor has direct linkages with the Council’s Community Plan which contains a similar outcome theme, ‘**We live and work in attractive, resilient and environmentally friendly places**’ (Theme 4 Where we live).

Other Council departments have strategies which the HL Monitor can be a key aid to, such as community and leisure facilities provision, parks and leisure, waste or the promotion of the district by supporting existing industries and attracting new industrial investments through Business Growth Programmes and the Belfast Region City Deal.

**1.6 Purpose of the LDP and HL Monitor**

The purpose of the LDP is to spatially interpret how the Council area has developed to the present day and, through its strategic policy framework how it will direct and guide where future development proposals are considered beneficial to the Council and the wider regional context.

The purpose of the HL Monitor is to provide the number of net additional housing units built in the council’s district for this reporting year and the cumulative number of additional housing units since 2019, for comparison with the strategic housing figures in Table 3 of the adopted Plan Strategy. The HL Monitor provides valuable information on annual build rates, relative to planned densities and an indication of the windfall projections. The HL Monitor can also help identify if and where any shortfall in potential housing land supply may occur as the Local Policies Plan is drafted.

In addition to keeping the effectiveness of housing strategies and policies of the LDP under review, the HL Monitor is an information source which may be useful to other key stakeholders, particularly housebuilders on the availability of land suitable for development and neighbouring councils in terms of having regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies[[4]](#footnote-4).

**1.7 Methodology**

The Council gathers data for housing monitoring from Building Control Completion Certificates[[5]](#footnote-5). This is the same methodology used by the Department when it was responsible for the Northern Ireland Housing Monitor. The Council considers this remains the most appropriate mechanism to determine housing figures for the purpose of monitoring.

The HL Monitor is supplemented by an interactive [Housing Monitor Map](https://lisburn.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/interactivelegend/index.html?appid=47fe5c9d001245258943438f54ea247a) which contains details of those sites within our settlements identified as suitable for residential development, either as zoned housing sites from extant development plans or other lands that have been granted planning permission for housing (Urban Capacity and Windfall Sites).

Identified sites are classified in the Housing Monitor Map as;

* Complete;
* Development Ongoing; and,
* Not Started.

Sites are further subclassified into one of the following site types;

* Zoned Residential;
* Other Zoned;
* Whiteland;
* Redevelopment; or,
* Infill Site.

Zoned sites, whether residential or other, are those that have been designated within extant Development Plans. Whiteland is any area within our settlements that has no specific land use designation. Redevelopment sites are those already in use where only the net housing gain is recorded, i.e. the number of new houses gained over and above any existing number of houses. Infill sites, as the name suggests, are parcels of land in residential areas sufficiently sized to accommodate further residential units.

On the Housing Monitor Map each identified site has an information box, accessed by clicking within the site area, which provides detail on its subclassification, the number of completed dwellings and the total area developed. The number of potential dwellings and the developable area remaining are also identified. Potential dwellings and developable area on a site can change if new planning permissions are subsequently granted.

Sites which have expired planning permissions will continue to be monitored if they are considered to retain residential development potential. However, sites will be removed where another form of development is approved and works to secure that development are commenced, for example a change of use from a warehouse to an office. A new LDP document may also remove potential residential development sites if no extant planning permission exists at the time the LDP document is adopted.

To calculate the number of potential dwellings remaining on lands without a planning permission and where only a site area is known, an estimate of likely density is used. This is primarily based on the housing density bands set out in the PS[[6]](#footnote-6) but also having regard to the characteristics of the site.

For Development Ongoing sites it may appear on the ground that more dwellings are complete than the figures noted in the HL Monitor, this is because building control completion certificates remain to be issued.

The findings of the HL Monitor are primarily sourced from desk-based analysis of data held by, or available to the Council. Data sources include;

* histories of Building Regulation Completion Certificates issued in the reporting year;
* histories of planning permissions granted in any of the settlement development limits, either during the reporting year or prior to that and which remain extant, or ‘live’ and therefore capable of implementation; and,
* Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Geospatial Information, such as Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland (OSNI) Spatial NI data, that identify new developments within settlement development limits.

Whilst all these sources of information aid effective monitoring field work has been undertaken to confirm land uptake.

**2.0****Development in Reporting Year 2023/24**

Data collated in Table 1, individually and cumulatively records for the defined settlement hierarchy[[7]](#footnote-7), the amount of available land for housing at the beginning and end of the reporting year; the land area developed and the number of dwellings completed during the year; the net number of dwellings completed since 2019 and, the potential number of dwellings remaining to be developed were all planning permission implemented on the monitored sites. Table 1 also provides updated Strategic Housing Allocation (SHA) figures to the end of the LDP period in 2032, by subtraction of the number of dwellings completed since 2019 from the total potential indicated in the PS[[8]](#footnote-8).

Table 1 has not accounted for rural completions and whilst these remain important to overall monitoring and are discussed below, it is analysis of the data relevant to settlements that is important, as these are the primary locations for residential development in accordance with the policies and strategies of the PS.

**2.1 Analysis of Table 1**

Columns 1 and 2

It is a requirement of Regulation 25(2)(a) of the LDP Regulations (NI) 2015, that the monitor records the Housing Land Supply at the beginning and end of the reporting year.

In this year Housing Land Supply has increased by 39 hectares, from 320 to 359 hectares. Whilst windfall approvals can increase supply year on year, an increase of 39 hectares is significant. This increase, less land developed during this year is accounted for by the inclusion of 50 hectares of residential land on Strategic Mixed Use (SMU01) West Lisburn/Blaris site, following adoption of the PS in September 2023.

Columns 3 and 4

These record 17 hectares of land were developed with the completion of 350 dwellings across all settlements in this monitoring year. As described later in this report, this is well below build rates for previous years and may impact on the projected growth figures of the PS to 2032.

Column 5

In addition to the 350 dwellings completed in the monitoring year, it is a requirement of Regulation 25(2)(b)(ii) of the LDP Regulations (NI) 2015 to record the net additional housing built in the period since the local policies plan was first adopted or approved. Whilst the Council has yet to publish and adopt its LPP it has, as good practice, recorded in Column 5 that there has been 2930 net additional housing units built in the period since 2019.

Column 6

This column records the number of dwelling units remaining from the SHA for the remaining years of the LDP to 2032, once those dwelling units in Column 5 have been subtracted.

The remaining projected SHA growth figures for each of the settlements are indicated which, cumulatively, account for 8773 dwellings remaining over the lifetime of the LDP.

Column 7

This column records there are 8474 potential dwellings remaining on all monitored sites within settlements. This figure is comparable to the cumulative figure of 8773 dwellings remaining of the projected SHA growth figures in the PS and, if monitored sites were to be built out, these would not exceed the projected growth rates and can be accommodated without the need to designate further housing zones.

Whilst the cumulative number of monitored sites do not exceed the projected SHA growth figures, there are some settlements where the number of dwellings on monitored sites do exceed the projected SHA figures. These exceptions exist in the Castlereagh Greater Urban Area (1383 potential units remain on monitored sites, against the 1041 remaining units of forecast growth) and Villages & Small Settlements (831 potential units remain on monitored sites, against the 592 remaining units of forecast growth). This is simply explained by the number of windfall and urban capacity sites within these settlements.

**Table 1: Completed Development and Strategic Housing Allocation Data 2023/24**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Settlement** | **Column 1** | **Column 2** | **Column 3** | **Column 4** | **Column 5** | **Column 6** | **Column 7** |
| **Land Supply April 2023 (Ha)[[9]](#footnote-9)** | **Land Supply March 2024 (Ha)** | **Area Developed 2023/24 (Ha)** | **Dwellings Completed 2023/24** | **Dwellings Completed 2019/24** | **Projected Growth remaining to 2032** | **Monitored Sites, Potential Dwellings Remaining** |
| **Lisburn City** | 111.96\* | 113.95 | 3.49 | 86 | 1181 | 3560 | 3370 |
| **Lisburn Greater Urban Area** | 0.45\* | 0.45 |  |  | 83 | 159 | 25 |
| **Castlereagh Greater Urban Area** | 81.35\* | 76.435 | 4.9 | 84 | 665 | 1041 | 1383 |
| **Carryduff** | 49.3 | 45.4 | 4.23 | 93 | 326 | 1221 | 902 |
| **Royal Hillsborough & Culcavy** | 15.217\* | 14.065 | 1.62 | 30 | 93 | 408 | 265 |
| **Moira** | 17.4 | 16.07 | 0.95 | 17 | 170 | 442 | 348 |
| **Urban Settlement Total (Rounded)** | **276** | **266** | **15** | **310** | **2518** | **6831** | **6293** |
| **Villages & Small Settlements** | 43.9 | 42.9 | 1.86 | 40 | 412 | 592 | 831 |
| **West Lisburn/Blaris** |  | 50 |  |  |  | 1350 | 1350 |
| **Overall Settlement Total (Rounded)** | **320** | **359** | **17** | **350** | **2930** | **8773** | **8474** |

**2.2 Analysis of Completions 2023/24**

As highlighted in Table 1, Column 4 above, 350 dwellings were completed within settlements in this reporting year. Figure 1 below shows year on year, since 2019, there has been a consistent downward trend in annual completions and very significantly in this current reporting year. If such decreases needed any further emphasis, the mean urban completions for the fifteen years prior to 2019, represented by the red line on Figure 1, was 650 units per annum. The downturn in completions becomes most evident from 2022 onwards and may be the result of global events since 2020, primarily triggered by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The growth ambitions of the Council are reflected in its SHA, which is robustly derived from Housing Growth Indicator figures provided by the Department, in combination with identified windfall and urban capacity sites. Whilst Columns 6 and 7 of Table 1 confirm that the projected housing growth can be accommodated within those sites monitored by the Council, the downward trend in completions could have an impact on the Council’s projected SHA over the remaining years of the LDP.

The primary focus of Council’s PS is that sustainable housing development should be accommodated within settlements however, the SHA does also have provision for 632 rural dwellings.

Figure 2 illustrates that in this reporting year 64 rural dwellings were completed. Since 2019 rural completions have fluctuated year on year between a low of 57 dwellings in 2019/20 to a high of 81 dwellings in 2020/21 and 2022/23. Rural completions differ considerably to urban completions by not showing the same pattern of consecutive falls in completion numbers, albeit involving a smaller number of dwellings. To demonstrate consistency in rural completions, Figure 2 shows mean completions in the fifteen years prior to 2019 as represented by the red line.

From this comparison it is seen that rural completions remain comparable to mean past and projected completions. This bucks the trend seen for the fall in urban completions, if global events were the cause. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that rural completions this year remain more closely aligned with the past mean figures.

**3.0 Five Year Supply of Housing Land**

As part of the ‘plan, monitor and manage’ approach of the LDP, the SPPS, Paragraph 6.140 requires, as a minimum, a 5-year supply of land for housing is maintained. The adopted PS set out the SHA figures for the Plan period to 2032 and determined there would be a sufficient supply of housing land to accommodate those SHA growth ambitions of the Council.

Until the end of the LDP in 2032 the remaining SHA for settlements is 8773 units (Table 1, Column 6), this is expressed on Figure 3 as the Mean Annual SHA Projected Growth to 2032, on the assumption that the growth is averaged over the remaining 8 years of the LDP. In addition, Figure 3 records the Mean Potential Growth (Monitored Sites), also using the assumption that development on monitored sites is averaged over the remaining 8 years of the LDP.

It is important to note from Figure 3 that capacity on monitored sites never exceeds the SHA projected growth and so, in terms of a 5-year land supply, there remains sufficient capacity. To further quantify this assumptive methodology, the past data on dwelling completions are also presented on Figure 3 in three scenarios, as follows.

Scenario 1 – projects growth, based on the mean annual completions between 2004 and 2018 (651 units/annum). If projected growth were to follow that same rate over the 5 years from 2024/25 it can be seen in Figure 3 that it falls well below the capacity available on monitored sites. In this scenario there remains a sufficient 5-year land supply for housing.

Scenario 2 – projects growth, based on the mean annual completions between 2019 and this year, 2024 (586 units/annum). If projected growth were to follow that same rate for the next 5 years from 2024/25 it also falls well below the capacity available on monitored sites. In this scenario there remains a sufficient 5-year land supply for housing.

Scenario 3 – projects growth, based on the mean annual completions in this current year, 2024/25 (350 units/annum). As has been discussed, this is a significant decrease on previous years which, if projected growth were to follow that same rate over the next 5 years from 2024/25, it falls well below the capacity available on monitored sites. In this scenario there remains a sufficient 5-year land supply for housing.

# 4.0 Quantum of Housing Development Land

The distribution of housing development land throughout the settlement hierarchy is represented in Figure 4.

This distribution accords with the PS, particularly in regard to its Plan Objective A – Enabling Sustainable Communities and Delivery of New Homes, where it can be seen that the largest settlements contain the greatest concentration of available land. Lisburn City, being the civic centre, retains the greatest amount of housing land (37%), followed by Castlereagh Greater Urban Area (25%) and Carryduff (15%).

Whilst Villages & Small Settlements (14%) are commensurate to larger settlements in terms of land availability, it is of note that this represents distribution across a combination of 47 settlements and, for individual settlements, the percentage of availability is much smaller.

Figure 5 provides further analysis of availability by development land use classification. This accords with the data contained in the Housing Monitor Map, that being lands classified into Residential Zones; Other Zones and Windfall sites with availability or permission for the development of housing stock in accordance with the Strategic Housing Allocation (SHA) of the PS.

Land zoned for residential uses, as defined within existing Development Plans account for 72%, which is the largest available source (259 hectares). Land zoned for other uses, primarily employment and industrial zoned lands, have been granted permission for housing development, typically in mixed use schemes and account for 8% of availability (30 hectares). 20% availability (70 hectares) is accounted for by windfall sites which, for the purposes of this report are a combination of development opportunity sites, infill sites and whiteland sites within the settlements.

Through Figure 5 it is considered that the allocated SHA over the remaining lifetime of the LDP to 2032 can be accommodated through a combination of these land use zonings.

**4.0 Conclusions**

It is clear from the above analysis that in this monitoring year, whilst the number of completions has dropped significantly from those recorded in previous monitoring years, there remains sufficient land availability for the provision of housing in accordance with the Strategic Housing Allocation set out in the PS.

The reason(s) for the significant drop in completions this year are unknown, and it remains to be seen if they will continue to be repressed in coming years. If so, this will affect the housing growth strategy of the PS, in so far as it will not be met within the lifetime of the LDP to 2032.

However, this HL Monitor and its accompanying Housing Monitor Map, records the potential growth if all extant planning approvals were to be implemented. It shows that there are sufficient lands remaining in the Council area for housing growth and that the majority of availability is catered for on land already zoned for residential use.

This HL Monitor also demonstrates that a five-year supply of land remains available, should all approvals be implemented over the remainder of the LDP to 2032.

1. LDP 2032, Plan Strategy Part 1, Figure 3 & Table 1, pages 42-43 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. DPPN1 Introduction: Context for Local Development Plans, Figure 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. DPPN 6 Soundness, Consistency Test C1 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Soundness Test C4, Development Plan Practice Note 6 Soundness [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Completion Certificates are issued when all relevant requirements of building regulations have been satisfied (Reg 14 of the Building Regulations (NI) 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Further information on densities is set out in Part 2 Plan Strategy, HOU4 d) Page 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Plan Strategy, Part 1, Page 42, Figure 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Plan Strategy, Part 1, Page 58, Table 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Asterisked figures in Column 1 are, due to a calculation error, revisions to those published in

   Table 1 of the 2022/23 HL Monitor Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)